

Vision 21 Implementation Committee

Meeting Notes, September 7, 2006

Accepted September 21, 2006

Members Present: Austin Bliss, Vinnie DeNovellis, Sara Oaklander, Meg O'Brien, Paul Santos.

Not Present: Donna Brescia, Kirk Hazlett, Anne Rittenburg, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Jay Szklut

Others Present: Gary Rossi, Executive Director, Freedom Commons at Belmont Hill

A. Administrivia

Minutes of the August 3, 2006 meeting were reviewed, but not approved, as the members present did not represent a quorum.

B. Freedom Commons

Gary Rossi provided a brief overview on Freedom Commons at Belmont Hill, which is a new retirement community being constructed off Pleasant St in Belmont.

C. Updates

Harvard Lawn Fire Station

Meg reported that the RFP assembly is going well.

Belmont Center

Sara reported that the fire station's winning bidder was selected in contradiction with the committee's recommendation. A P&S will now be negotiated, and there are a number of issues to resolve, including the possibility of putting a third floor on the building.

Sara also reported that the Store 24 closure caught the group by surprise. Jay plans to sit down with the owner of the property to discuss next steps. The committee hopes to develop stronger relationships with business owners.

Paul suggested that the farmers market would appreciate as much advance notice as possible of any changes in use to the parking lot where it is now located.

Sustainable Belmont

Paul reported that the group is working hard on the anti-idling campaign as well as the climate action plan.

D. VIC Meeting – Day of the week

Meg reported that the issue of changing the day of the week of our meeting is closed, and we will continue to meet on Thursdays.

E. Review of Meet Belmont – Likes, Dislikes, Improvement Opportunities

Likes:

- space
- planning (e.g. it was great to have electric fans available)
- advance check-in (preprinted nametags)
- number of young families who came as a family unit
- sending postcards to new residents

Dislikes:

- perceived weaker turnout (although it was noted that we do not have the data available to compare with past years)

Improvement Opportunities:

- better exterior signage
- common outfits/pinnies/hats/sashes/buttons anything that will make it easy to identify the volunteers who are working the event. We were particularly excited by the idea of a brightly colored Miss America-like sash for each of us.
- consolidate the exhibitor categories (e.g. have fewer tablecloth colors)
- have a featured speaker, discussion topic or other ‘hook’ to bring people in.
- raffle

F. Planning our Work

We began discussion of our work plan. Since we had only 5 people attending, Meg proposed that we work on either one or two buckets since we didn't have enough people to work in small groups on all three. Austin questioned whether or not we had agreed at the last meeting to implement all three ‘buckets’ concurrently. Meg said she thought we had, and advocated for finding the overlap among the three and making sure they support each other.

Sara expressed concern about Bucket 3 being a sinkhole and wanted to make sure the energy we put into it met all our goals.

Paul pushed that whatever we do needs to have ‘a hook’.

Sara suggested working on the sequencing of the three buckets rather than the specifics of each bucket.

Paul suggested we define success, so we know after town day if we were successful. Meg pointed out that one indicator may be usage of the word, e.g. “business friendly” and

how it popped up into our vernacular. Sara suggested we capture some key phrases from the vision and start using those phrases in all our publicity and watch to see it become part of the town's vernacular. Sara picked out seven phrases from the vision.

Paul suggested that we pick something that will get everyone's attention, give people some specifics that they can react to.

Vinny suggested a metaphor: to grab the vision (the ball) with the three fingers of the buckets getting it out to the general public.

The group discussed the challenges of maintaining forward motion given that a different subset of members appears at every meeting. Sara suggested that we have agreement that there is a process and we follow it. For example, if we have only five people present, we probably shouldn't meet.

Paul suggested that we need a chair who keeps us on track and gives a good synthesis of where the group is at and where it needs to head. Sara argued that we need to find a way to work collaboratively as a group, and it isn't the role of the chair.

G. Closing

Next meeting: September 21, 2006.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Austin Bliss
Secretary Pro Tempore